



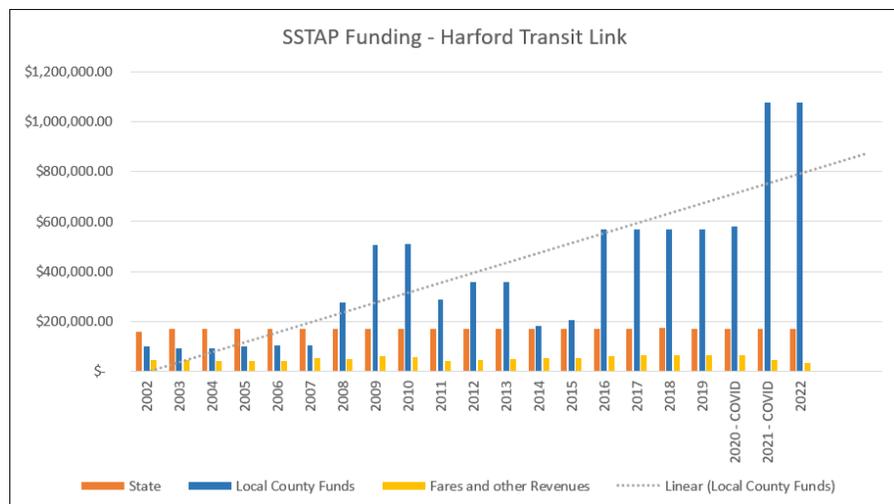
March 31, 2022

House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair McIntosh & Vice Chair Chang:

I provided oral testimony for HB1019 and SB838, critical tools to ensuring the future of our riders receiving trips through the Statewide Specialized Transportation Assistance Program (SSTAP). I shared our numbers and data but with limited time, I was unable to share the need and potential benefit of your support. The growth in riders who need the service as well as the amount of service needed has been impacted by COVID in ways that have for Harford County, exceeded our pre-pandemic concerns.

Prior to the pandemic, our main concern was the dialysis rider increases and the financial constraints. We were watching our population of seniors increase due to the benefits of modern medicine, which we transport them to. We saw an increase in riders due to programs no longer providing transportation and their clients who require more care than public transit provides.



Two years into our new operating environment, our concerns have developed beyond our previous planning models. Our residents who never imagined needing our services are applying

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for assistance. Affected by COVID, our dialysis requests are up with applications noting long term needs with End State Renal Disease (ESRD). Other applications note pulmonary and cardiac conditions due to having survived COVID only to live with a lifetime of ongoing medical treatments needed.

This is additionally impacted by programs who closed their doors during the pandemic, stopping their transportation programs offered to their clients. As they reopen their services, they are not planning on providing transportation with the driver shortage and increased operating costs. These clients are being directed to us with the expectation we will meet their needs at the level of care they previously received.

We have reviewed our client data and have begun replacing our older fleet with buses purpose built with more places to secure a wheelchair or mobility device. This is to give us better utilization of the fleet so we may serve more riders. We have reexamined our scheduling methods, trying to better coordinate trips and service additional clients. We still cannot meet the needs we are being charged with.

63% of our clients are under 60 years old with Neurological, Cognitive, Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health conditions that qualify them for our services. This population typically has one condition they are living with. Our seniors have multiple conditions they are managing with our help. We serve all riders with respect and dignity.

Our residents rely on us. They look forward to our blue buses pulling up to their homes, to go to the senior centers or to get groceries. Others anxiously await us after dialysis and other medical trips that have left them weak and wanting to go home. There is a cost associated with all these trips however, the value of a trip provided is priceless. You have the power to support our services and our Marylanders through your favorable position on this bill.

Sincerely,



Jodi M Glock  
Administrative Supervisor